SIGHTINGS

*Presents*

## Extracts taken from

# the UneXplained

## Dr Karl P.N. Shuker

# Contents


## 6 Crop Circles

The strange, sometimes complex patterns found in corn, largely in Southern England. ET or something else?

## 10 Green Children of Woolpit

The English village of Woolpit where two children, green in colour, were found raised by wolves.

## 13 Lizard Men

Hideous reptilian men proceed to terrify eyewitnesses who stumble across them.

## 16 The Jersey Devil

New Jersey and neigbouring states play host in the USA to the strangest of winged beasts.

## 17 The Dover Demon

One dark night, two unrelated witnesses see a strange creature in Dover, Massachusettes.

## 19 Pedro – Wyoming's Unexplained Midget Mummy

The smallest of mummified creatures brings intrigue to those who study it.

## 22 Flying Saucers and UFOs – Alien Spacecraft or Elusive Sky-beasts?

The theory that UFOs are in fact living cretaures!

## 26 Visitors from Venus – Extra-terrestrials or inter-dimensionals?

Reports of strange beings from the planet Venus. Adamski has photogaphs of their craft, but were they genuine?

## 31 The Goblins of Hopkinsville

Odd Goblin-like creatures which terrorise families in Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

# Crop Circles

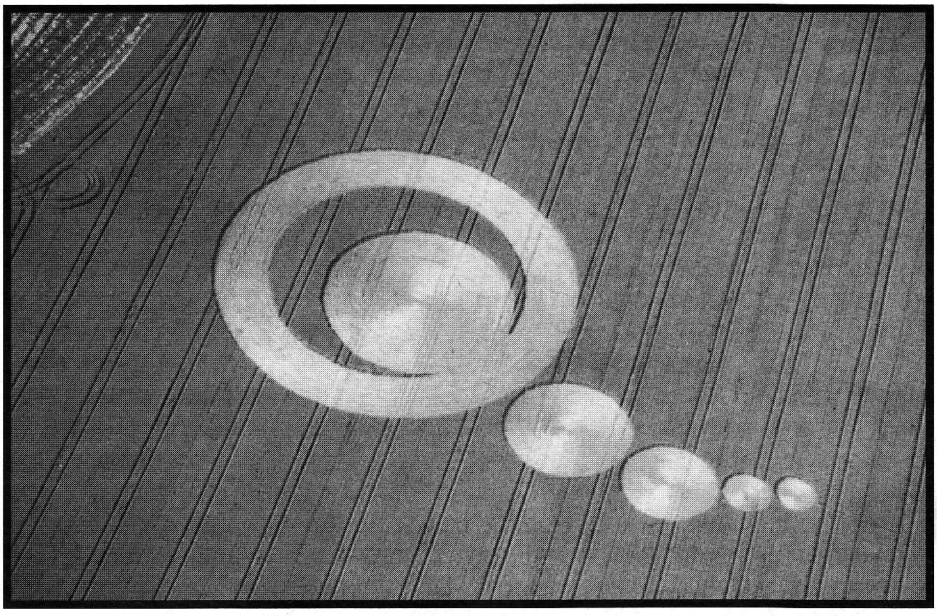
Few mysteries have gained such a high public profile so rapidly as the occurrence of crop circles. Prior to 1980, these baffling but beautiful geometrical anomalies that mysteriously appear, usually at night, in fields of corn or other crops were known only to a few farmers. Today they are one of the most famous and visually recognizable enigmas of all time. Their study even has its own name – cereology.

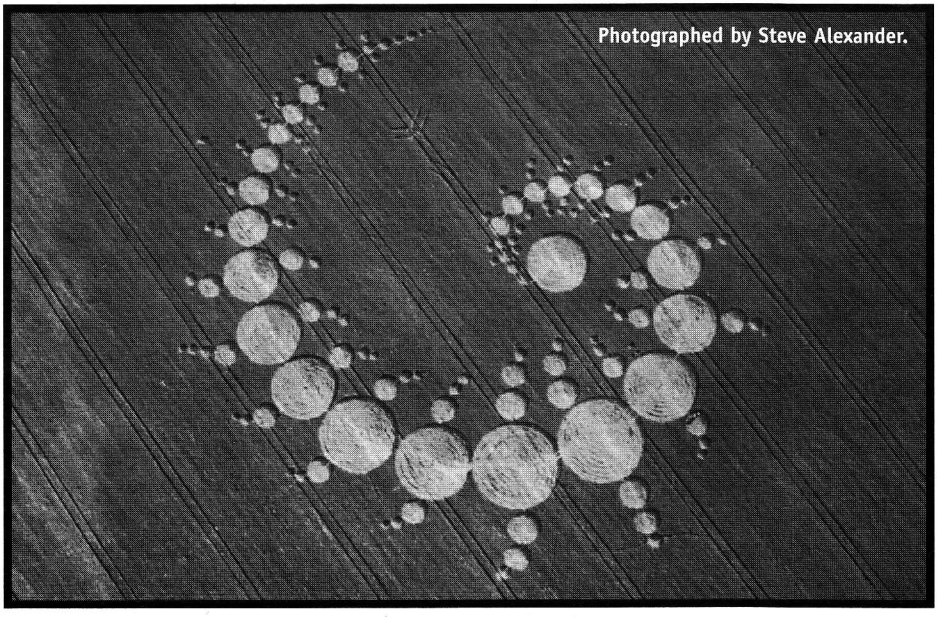
The variety of crop circles is almost endless, but the simplest form consists of a single circle within which all the corn stems are flattened to the ground but not broken, merely bent over at their base. Often the circle has an outer ring whose stems are also bent, but almost invariably in the opposite direction to those within the remainder of the circle. Sometimes the circle is surrounded by an equidistant series of much smaller circles (satellites), which may or may not be linked to the principal circle by channels. Other circles may contain narrow rings of unbent stems, sandwiched between the main body of the circle and an outermost ring of bent stems.

At first, crop circles seemed to be limited to England's southern counties, but once the phenomenon began to receive media attention, many more examples were reported. Soon, much of Britain was represented by sightings, with reports also coming in from overseas. Explanations offered for their occurrence ranged from rutting hedgehogs or badgers, landing marks left behind by visiting UFOs, and bickering flocks of birds, to fungal infections, over-fertilization and covert military involvement featuring secret weaponry trials.

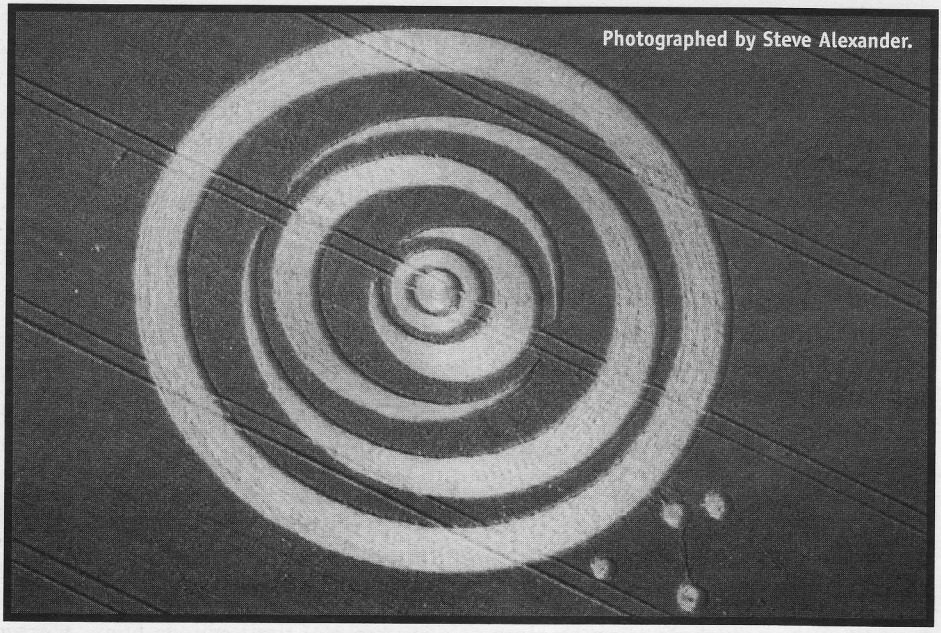
Not only has the number of sightings increased, so too has the complexity of the circles reported. In their bestseller, *Circular Evidence*, engineers-turned-cereologists Pat Delgado and Colin Andrews suggest that the circles are cryptic pictograms created by some higher cosmic intelligence, and were recognized by the Hopi Indians of Arizona as hieroglyphics disclosing that the world was in grave peril.

A rather more prosaic explanation, but increasingly conceded nowadays by investigators, is that the more intricate the circles become, the less likely it is that they are untouched by human hands, not to mention feet, lawn rollers, and ropes anchored to a central stake. How else can we explain, for instance, the startling occurrence near





Photographed by Steve Alexander.


Photographed by Steve Alexander.

Royston, Cambridgeshire, in August 1991 of a crop circle exhibiting the perfect configuration of a highly complex computer-generated model from chaos mathematics known as the Mandelbrot set? There is no question that the hoax factor plays a very prominent part in the occurrence of crop circles, as confirmed by various media exposés and statements from self-confessed fraudsters.

Nevertheless, many of the simpler circles are undoubtedly authentic. After all, some have occurred in remote, inaccessible areas, or in localities rarely visited by anyone, and why waste time producing fake examples here?. The most popular, and to my mind the most plausible, solution to these is the plasma vortex theory, proposed by Dr Terence Meaden, formerly associate professor of physics at Dalhousie University in Canada, more recently editor of the *Journal of Meteorology* and a symposium volume entitled *Circles From the Sky*.

According to Dr Meaden, if a hill obstructs a gust of wind, a vortex is formed, which meets stationary air on the hill's lee side to create a spiralling column that sucks in more air and atmospheric electricity. When this makes contact with the crop field, it spirals, flattening the corn into the familiar configuration of a crop circle.

The column's electrical charge also produces the high-pitched noise that has been reported by people just before encountering a newly formed circle. Meaden's theory succinctly elucidates not only the physical construction of crop circles but also those rare yet fascinating occasions when eyewitnesses have been fortunate enough to witness the creation of a circle.

One such event occurred in August 1991, when Gary and Vivienne Tomlinson were taking an evening walk in Hambledon, Surrey, at the edge of a cornfield. Suddenly, the corn on their right-hand side began to move. A mist hovered above them and they could hear a strange high-pitched sound. Then a very powerful whirling wind began pushing them from above and all sides, until they could hardly stand upright – except for Gary's hair, responding to the localized build-up of static electricity. Abruptly, the vortex split in two, then raced away, shimmering mistily, and leaving behind two shocked eyewitnesses standing in the middle of a classic crop circle, whose corn stems were flattened all around them.

Further support for Meaden's theory has come from a team of Japanese physicists led by Professor Yoshihiko Ohtsuki, who announced in June 1991 that they had successfully generated tiny balls of plasma (ionized air) in the laboratory, formed by electromagnetic interference in the air. When these balls made contact with plates covered in aluminium powder, they created circles and rings corresponding in appearance to crop circles.

Continuing research has also unearthed some very intriguing but hitherto-unrecognized pre-1980 accounts of crop circles. Of particular interest is an illustrated pamphlet from August 1678, in which it is suggested that a "mowing devil" was responsible for an extraordinary configuration in a Hertfordshire oat field that greatly resembles a crop circle. Its present-day significance is indicated by the fact that an 1810 reproduction of this pamphlet was sold to a farmer at a Wiltshire auction in March 1994 for £280.

According to Dr Meaden, however, crop circles may date back considerably further than this. In his book *The Goddess of the Stones*, he boldly speculated that the famous cup and ring decorations favoured by Neolithic artists, ancient mazes, and other vulva-symbolizing geometric designs associated with primeval fertility goddesses may all have been inspired by early man's sightings of crop circles and their energetic creation.

It has often been said that nothing is new in the realms of fashion. The same may also be true, it would seem, in the world of cereology.

# Green Children of Woolpit

The remarkable history of the green children of Woolpit was first documented by two medieval English chroniclers – Ralph, Abbot of Coggeshall, and William of Newburgh. One day during the reign of King Stephen (AD 1135–54), two children were found weeping and wandering, lost and forlorn, in the great pits used to trap wolves at the village of Woolpit, in Suffolk. They caused great amazement among the villagers, but this was due not to their behaviour and their unintelligible dialect but to their appearance – for their clothes, their eyes and, most strikingly, their skin were all green! They were taken to the house of local landowner Sir Richard de Calne, which became their home; but despite all attempts to feed them, for quite a time after their discovery these strange children refused to eat anything other than green beans. Sadly, the younger of the two, a boy, died less than a year later, but the other child, a girl, grew strong and spent the rest of her life in the area.

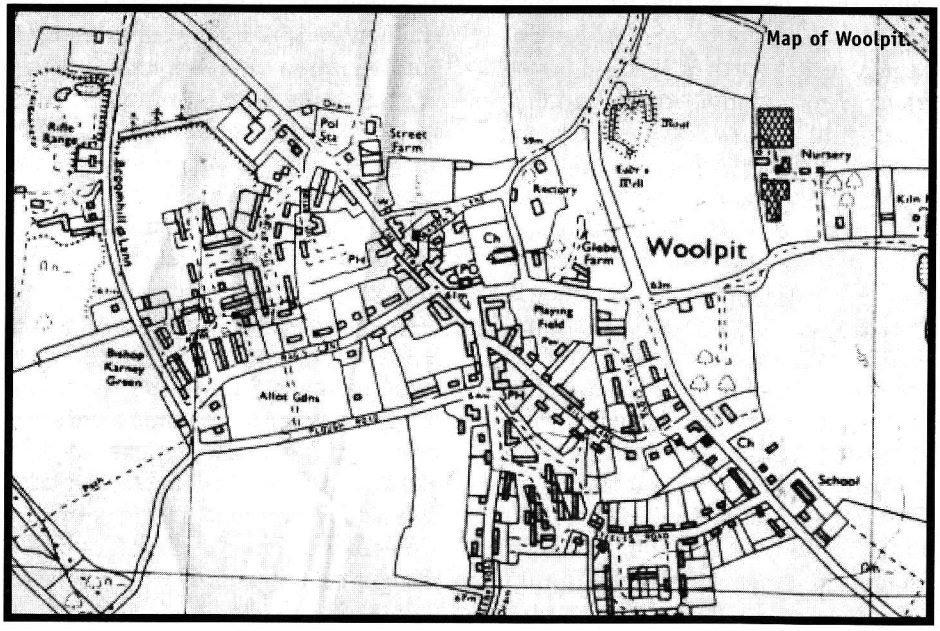
Over the years, the green tinge to her skin gradually vanished, and when she reached maturity she married a man from King's Lynn in Norfolk. She also learnt English, and was eventually able to inform the villagers that she and the boy had come from a country called St Martin's Land, where there was no sun, only a permanent hazy twilight. They had been following their flocks when they had entered an underground passageway and stumbled out, on the other side, into the bright sunlight of Woolpit.

Many explanations have been offered for this curious story. Because of the children's green skin (the colour of Faerie) and preference for green beans (food of the dead, according to Celtic lore), some researchers have discounted their history as merely a charming folktale. Others have linked it with England's traditional Green Man or Jack-in-the-Green – a leafy supernatural entity personifying fertility and the rebirth of spring. It has even been suggested that the children had originated from a mysterious subterranean world present beneath the surface of the earth and lacking sunlight, or from some parallel dimension through which they had accidentally stepped into our own.

In recent times, a much more literal, sober interpretation has also been put forward for consideration. During the 1980s, investigator Paul Harris visited Woolpit and learnt that local people

generally believe that the story derives from a legend concerning a medieval Norfolk earl who was guardian to two young children. The earl tried unsuccessfully to poison the children with arsenic and then abandoned them in Wayland Wood, in the area of Thetford Forest on the Norfolk–Suffolk border. Here they would surely have died, thus enabling him to take control of the estate that they were due to inherit when they reached adulthood. According to the Woolpit people, these probably became the green children who were later found, still alive but disoriented and ill. Worth noting here is that arsenic poisoning can cause chlorosis, in which the skin turns green. So too can anaemia, a result of malnutrition, from which the abandoned youngsters were likely to have been suffering. A diet-related origin for their green skin would also explain why the girl's complexion reverted to a normal colour once she began to thrive on proper food.

Harris believes that the story's other key portions have straightforward



**Recent drawing of 'Green Children' by girl in Woolpit school.**

explanations too. For instance, a few miles north-west of Woolpit is a village called Fornham St Martin, which could explain the identity of "St Martin's Land". Further north is Thetford Forest, whose dark interior would certainly seem twilit and sunless to two young children abandoned in its depths. The forest also contains many Neolithic flint mines and associated passages. Perhaps the youngsters wandered into one of them, which led to Woolpit. Furthermore, in the twelfth century most people did not travel very far, so the dialect of children from a distant village may indeed have sounded strange to Woolpit's inhabitants.

There is one final but intriguing twist to the tale of the Woolpit green children. An almost identical story is on record from nineteenth-century Spain, dating from August 1887 and set in the Catalonian village of Banjos. Indeed, apart from the difference in the locality and time, the only notable discrepancy between the two stories is that in the Spanish version the girl dies too, after about five years. Even their liking for beans is mentioned, and to add coincidence to coincidence, the nobleman who cares for them after their discovery is named as Señor Ricardo da Calno – not exactly dissimilar from Sir Richard de Calne!

This story has been unquestioningly recycled in several books; in *The Monster Trap and Other True Mysteries*, Peter Haining repeated a claim made by John Macklin that the documents and statements of the people who saw and looked after the two green children still exist. In 1986, however, Frank Preston revealed that he had written to the British Council Institute in Barcelona regarding this story, but although the institute conducted extensive searches on his behalf, which included contacting Spanish librarians, museums and town hall archives, as well as searching newspapers from August 1887 for relevant accounts, no trace of the story could be found. This is not surprising, because the village of Banjos does not exist. It is imaginary, just like its green children, whose story is clearly a hoax devised by someone inspired by the Woolpit version to create a more modern counterpart.

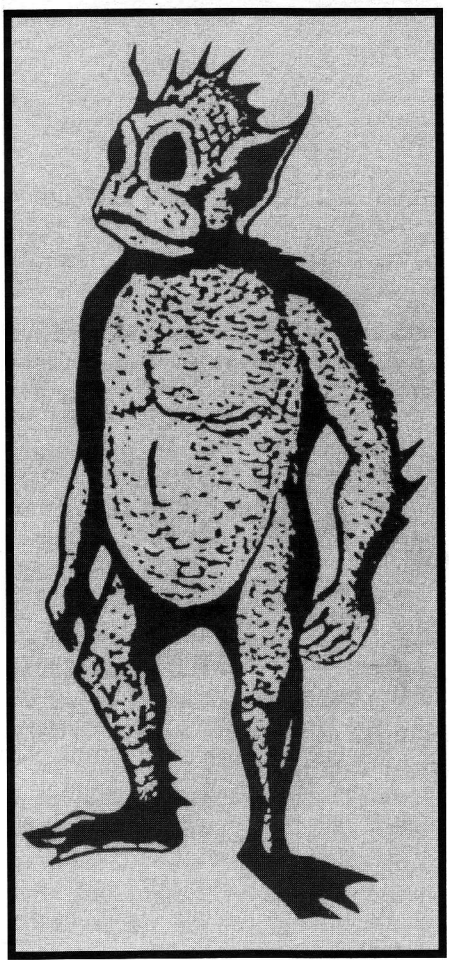
# Lizard Men

One of the most bizarre creatures reported in recent times is undoubtedly a nightmarish entity from South Carolina, which has been aptly nicknamed Lizard Man. According to eyewitnesses, it walks on its hind legs, stands just over 2 metres (7 feet) tall, and has glowing red eyes and green scaly skin. It has only three toes on each foot and three fingers on each hand, but every toe and every finger has a 10-cm- (4-inch) long black claw at its tip.

Lizard Man first made its presence felt at around 2 a.m. on 29 June 1988. This was when 17-year-old Christopher Davis was changing a flat tyre on his car near Scape Ore Swamp, which is just outside the backwater village of Bishopville in South Carolina's Lee County.

Chris was placing the jack into his car boot when he spied something very large running on its hind legs towards him, across a field close by. As it drew near, Chris jumped inside his car and tried to slam the door shut, but the horrifying reptile-man seized it from the other side, gripping the mirror as it attempted to wrench the door open! And when Chris tried to escape by accelerating hard, his scaly attacker

**The Lizard Man of South Carolina, with hind legs over 2 metres high, glowing red eyes and green skin. Similar to modern 'monster' in Puerto Rico: the Chupacabras.**



**'Lizard Men' have often been reported to be seemingly hostile to observers.**

jumped on to the car's roof! Luckily, it soon fell off as the vehicle sped away. When Chris arrived home he was trembling with fear, the roof of his car bore a series of long scratches and the wing mirror was severely twisted.

The massive media publicity generated by this incident led to many other Lizard Man reports emerging during the summer of 1988, but the same could not be said for Lizard Man itself, who eventually disappeared without ever having been satisfactorily explained.

Interestingly, this bizarre episode is far from being unique. Long before Chris Davis's frightening experience, many other parts of North America had also hosted encounters with reptilian man-monsters, astonishingly similar in appearance to the amphibious "gill-man" starring in Hollywood's classic *Creature from the Black Lagoon* movie.

On 19 August 1972, for example, Robin Flewellyn and Gordon Pike were allegedly chased away from the beach around Thetis Lake in British Columbia, Canada, by a 1.5-metre- (5-foot) tall bipedal monster with six sharp points on its head, which had unexpectedly surfaced in the lake.

Four days later, at around 3.30 p.m. on 23 August, Russell Van Nice and Michael Gold could only watch in amazement when what was presumably the same creature suddenly stepped out of the lake, looked around and then walked back into the water, disappearing from sight. According to their description, it was humanoid in shape, but with scaly silver skin, huge ears, the face of a monster and a pointed projection on its head.

In 1977, a State Conservation naturalist called Alfred Hulstruck claimed that a scale-covered man-beast regularly emerged at dusk from the red algae-choked waters of Southern Tier in New York State. Five years earlier, in March 1972, two policemen saw a frog-faced humanoid creature, about the size of a dog, plunge into Little Miami River near Loveland, Ohio. In this same area, back in 1955, a respectable

businessman claimed that he had seen a quartet of 1-metre- (3-foot) tall, frog-faced creatures squatting under a bridge like fairytale trolls.

Another longstanding tradition of scaly humanoids features the fish-men of Inzignanin, near Chicora – an area sandwiched between North and South Carolina. These beings were said to be covered with scales and had webbed hands. Most distinctive of all, however, were their tails, which were as thick as a man's arm, about 45 cm (18 inches) long and relatively inflexible, like those of crocodiles or alligators. According to local lore, they lived only on raw fish and therefore soon died out when the area's fish supplies became exhausted.

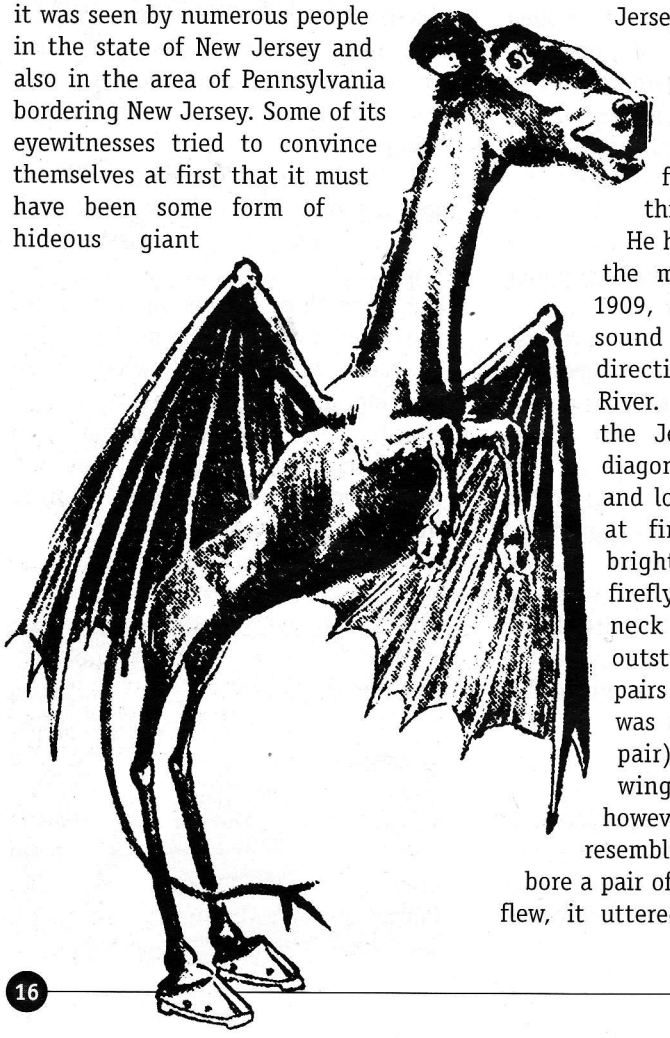
Equally strange was the 2-metre- (6-foot) tall, fluorescent-eyed monster that clawed Charles Wetzel's car on the evening of 8 November 1958 as he drove by the Santa Ana River near Riverside, California. Although often placed in the bigfoot (i.e. ape-man) category of mystery beasts, it was much more akin to the reptilian monsters, as noted by the writer Loren Coleman, because it was covered in leaf-like scales and had a protrusible beak-like mouth.

Needless to say, no real-life creatures of the "Black Lagoon" variety have ever been proven by science to exist on earth, either during the present or the past. Yet, if the course of evolution had taken a different turn, our planet may indeed have been home to life forms of this type. In 1982, the scientific journal *Syllogeus* published a very unusual but highly original paper by two well-respected Canadian palaeontologists, Dr Dale A. Russell and Dr R. Séguin from the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa. Its subject was the fascinating possibility that, if the dinosaurs had never died out, they would have eventually given rise to a dinosaurian counterpart of human beings.

In their paper, Russell and Séguin speculated about the likely appearance of such a creature and suggested that it would have stood upright on its hind legs, with three fingers on each hand. They even constructed a model of this 'dinosaur man' – and what is so amazing about it is that in overall appearance it is remarkably similar to the descriptions of Lizard Man and other reptilian man-beasts reported from modern-day North America!

# The Jersey Devil

One of the most extraordinary monsters on record from the USA became a major news story in January 1909, when it was seen by numerous people in the state of New Jersey and also in the area of Pennsylvania bordering New Jersey. Some of its eyewitnesses tried to convince themselves at first that it must have been some form of hideous giant bird, but they finally admitted that many of its features were far stranger than any observed in a bird, and the creature soon became known as the Jersey devil.



E.W. Minster, a postmaster from Bristol in Pennsylvania, gave a particularly detailed first-hand description of this mysterious monster. He had caught sight of it on the morning of 17 January 1909, after hearing an eerie sound coming from the direction of the Delaware River. According to Minster, the Jersey devil was flying diagonally across the river and looked like a large crane at first, but was glowing brightly like an immense firefly. It had a long slender neck that it held outstretched in flight, two pairs of legs (the front pair was shorter than the hind pair) and two long thin wings. Strangest of all, however, was its head, which resembled a ram's because it bore a pair of curled horns. And as it flew, it uttered a bloodcurdling cry,

which Minster described as a combined squawk and whistle, beginning very high and piercing but ending very low and hoarse.

At the same time that sightings of this incredible creature were being reported, strange marks resembling hoofprints were being discovered in the area too, and not just on the ground. Some were even spotted on the roofs of houses! Then, not long after these reports had come to an end, it seemed as if the mystery of the Jersey devil had finally been solved. An exhibition in Philadelphia's Arch Street Museum claimed that it had on display a genuine Jersey devil, which had recently been captured alive! Sadly, however, it proved to be nothing more remarkable than a kangaroo that had been decorated with bright green stripes and which had a pair of fake bronze-coloured wings strapped to its shoulders! It was, of course, a hoax – whereas almost a hundred years later, the real Jersey devil has still not been captured or conclusively identified. The mystery continues ...

# The Dover Demon

The last thing that 17-year-old Bill Bartlett expected to see when driving with two friends through Dover, Massachusetts, at around 10.30 p.m. on 21 April 1977 was a creature from another dimension. Yet that is what he may have done, at least in the opinion of some investigators – and judging from Bill's description of what he saw, they could have a point!

Driving along, his car's headlights suddenly illuminated a peculiar entity picking its way along a stone wall at the side of the road. As can be seen from the picture that Bill later prepared, which is reproduced here, the creature had a disproportionately large head, shaped like a water melon, with two big, protruding eyes that glowed orange, but it did not seem to have a mouth, nose or ears. Its body was small, its neck and limbs were long and thin, and its fingers and toes were slender and supple. The creature appeared to be hairless, but its peach-coloured skin was rough in texture. It stood about 1 metre (3–4 feet) high, and was observed only by Bill (his two friends were not looking in the right direction to see it).

Unknown to Bill, however, his strange sighting would soon be substantiated by an entirely independent eyewitness. Less than two hours later, 15-year-old John Baxter was walking home little more than a mile from the locality of Bill's encounter when he saw a strange figure coming towards him. After receiving no reply when he called out to it, John paused, and as he did so the figure ran away down a gully. John chased after it and when he was about 9 metres (30 feet) away, he could see it clearly, standing upright on its hind legs and gripping the trunk of a tree. When he spied its brightly glowing eyes staring at him from an otherwise featureless face, however, John decided to let caution supersede curiosity and he walked briskly back to the road. Once he reached home, he too made a visual record of what he had witnessed, and as can be seen here, his wholly independent illustration corresponds very closely indeed with Bill's.

At around midnight on 22 April, what writer Loren Coleman has subsequently called "the Dover demon" was seen again, this time by 15-year-old Abby Brabham while being driven home by Will Taintor, 18, who only spied it very briefly. Abby's description matched those of Bill and John in every respect except one: when she observed it, its eyes were glowing green, not orange. And thus ended the curious case of the Dover demon – for it has never been reported again and has never been satisfactorily identified.

If the descriptions of it are accurate – and they are certainly very consistent – the Dover demon does not resemble any species known to science, either from North America or elsewhere. It may not, however, be *entirely* unknown. The Cree nation of eastern Canada speak of a mysterious race of pygmy entities called the Mannegishi, who delight in playing tricks upon travellers. According to the Cree, the Mannegishi have round heads, long thin legs, arms with six fingers on each hand, and they live between rocks in the rapids. Excluding the finger count discrepancy, this description is reminiscent of the Dover demon.

# Pedro – Wyoming's Unexplained Midget Mummy

One day in October 1932, after spending several weeks seeking gold in a ravine at the base of the San Pedro mountains, about 100 kilometres (65 miles) south-west of Caspar in Wyoming, Cecil Main and Frank Carr spotted some indications of gold in one of the ravine's thick stone walls. The only way to determine whether the wall really did contain gold, however, was to blast it apart with dynamite, and so this is what they did. Once the resulting clouds of dust had begun to disperse, the two men peered through the yawning hole left behind and discovered that the wall had been hiding a small cavern. It was a natural cave, about 4.5 metres (15 feet) long but only 1.2 metres (4 feet) high and wide. Inside was a small ledge, and to the astonishment of the prospectors, they could see a tiny pixie-like creature sitting cross-legged upon it, with its arms folded across its waist. Looking closer at this extraordinary being, however, they discovered that it was no longer alive. In fact, it was a mummy, but unlike any seen before.

First and foremost, it was exceptionally small, less than 18 cm (7 inches) high as it sat there and with a total height of only 35 cm (14 inches). Yet it did not seem to be a child. Its face resembled that of a smirking old man, with a low brow, a broad flat nose, large eyes (one of which was half-closed) and a very wide mouth with thin lips. Its skin was a tanned, bronze colour, heavily wrinkled, its body was barrel-shaped, its hands were large and its long fingers bore minute but readily visible fingernails. The top of its head was abnormally flat and covered in a dark, gelatinous substance, eclipsing all but a fringe of hair around its edge.

The bewildered prospectors carefully lifted this enigmatic little effigy off its ledge and took it back with them when they eventually returned to Caspar, where it attracted an immense amount of interest. It became known as Pedro (after its mountain origin) and was eventually purchased by Ivan Goodman, a car dealer in Caspar. When scientists first learnt of its discovery, they were somewhat sceptical, suspecting a hoax.

**The mummified humanoid creature stands at a mere 14 inches in height.**

Nevertheless, after being shown the mummy by Goodman, anthropologist Dr Henry Shapiro from the American Museum of Natural History was intrigued enough to organize an X-ray examination for it. If this mysterious midget was simply a hoax, carefully constructed externally but with no internal substance, X-ray analysis would swiftly expose it as such.

Instead, however, the X-ray plates confirmed that Pedro possessed an irrefutably man-like skeleton, despite its tiny stature. It exhibited a complete set of ribs, fully formed arms and legs with all bones readily discernible, a backbone that had once been perfectly formed but which had subsequently suffered an injury, and also a fractured left collar-bone. Indeed, it seemed as if this little person had met its death through some violent attack, accounting not only for those injuries, but also for its flattened head and the dark gelatinous substance. When examined, it was found that the skull had been smashed by an extremely heavy blow, and the dark substance was exposed brain tissue and congealed blood.

As for Pedro's age, despite the severe damage its skull was sufficiently intact to reveal that its fontanelle (a soft space between the skull's bones) was closed. This is an adult characteristic; in babies and small children, it is still open. Moreover, Pedro also had a full set of teeth, the most distinctive of which were its large, noticeably pointed canines. Its overall morphology, internally and externally, indicated that it was about 65 years old when it died, and in Shapiro's opinion it was not from recent times, but dated far back into history.

In 1950, Goodman died and Pedro became the property of Leonard Wadler, but later vanished from the

headlines and today its location is unknown. In 1979, Pedro's X-rays were shown to Wyoming University anthropologist Professor George Gill, who announced that it had probably been a grossly malformed infant or foetus suffering from anencephaly – a severe condition in which most of the cranium and brain have failed to develop. Sometimes, moreover, the portion of brain that *has* formed is exposed, with no protective bony covering. This could account for Pedro's flattened head and its covering of congealed blood and brain tissues, but anencephaly cannot explain Pedro's adult features and dentition.

In 1993, French zoologist Dr François de Sarre suggested to me that Pedro may have been a foetus suffering from microcephaly (abnormal cranium and brain formation), but on to whose skeleton the skin of an adult man had been carefully moulded – in the same way that the Jivaros do when they produce their famous tzantzas or shrunken heads.

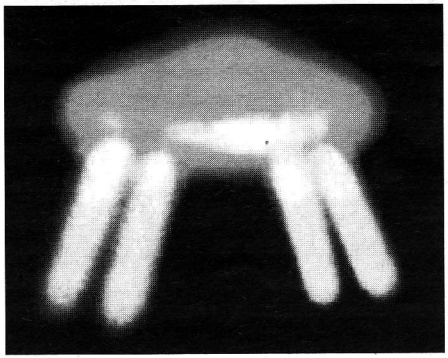
Professor Gill thought that Pedro may have belonged to a race of unknown prehistoric native American people. However, many modern native American groups claim that this continent was, and still is, home to a very aggressive race of pygmies or Little People, whose descriptions closely tally with Pedro. In particular, the Shoshone nation of Wyoming speak of the Nimerigar, who would attack them with tiny bows that shot poisoned arrows. According to some traditions, these pygmies even kill their own kind when they become ill, by beheading them or smashing their skulls – just like Pedro's skull had been smashed. It would be strange indeed if the true identity of Pedro proved to be a euthanased elf.

# Flying Saucers and UFOs – Alien Spacecraft or Elusive Sky-beasts?

Many sightings of supposed flying saucers and UFOs are simple misidentifications of certain earthly or astronomical objects, including weather balloons, the planet Venus, light-reflecting fog or clouds, distress flares, flocks of geese or even swarms of insects reflecting light, lenticular clouds, aeroplane vapour trails, low-flying aeroplanes and meteors.

As for the remainder, most people assume that any "genuine" flying saucers and UFOs are alien, extraterrestrial spacecraft; but what if at least some of them are extraordinary living creatures, native to our planet yet undiscovered by science? Largely unconsidered elsewhere, this fascinating idea has received appreciable attention from researchers in North America.

**UFO taking off in France. Some think they are space ships, others think they are something completely different.**



Few ecological niches on land or in the water are not occupied by animals modified for existence here – but what about the sky? Although certain insects and birds spend much of their time in flight, there are no animals that live their entire lives airborne in the sky, adapted for an exclusive existence in the atmosphere encircling our planet – or are there?

It is well known that the term "flying saucer" was coined by a reporter documenting Idaho businessman Kenneth Arnold's sighting of nine flying disc-shaped objects near Mount Rainier, Washington, while piloting a Callair aeroplane on 24 June

1947. Less well known is that Arnold considered these objects to be living organisms: "sort of like sky jellyfish".

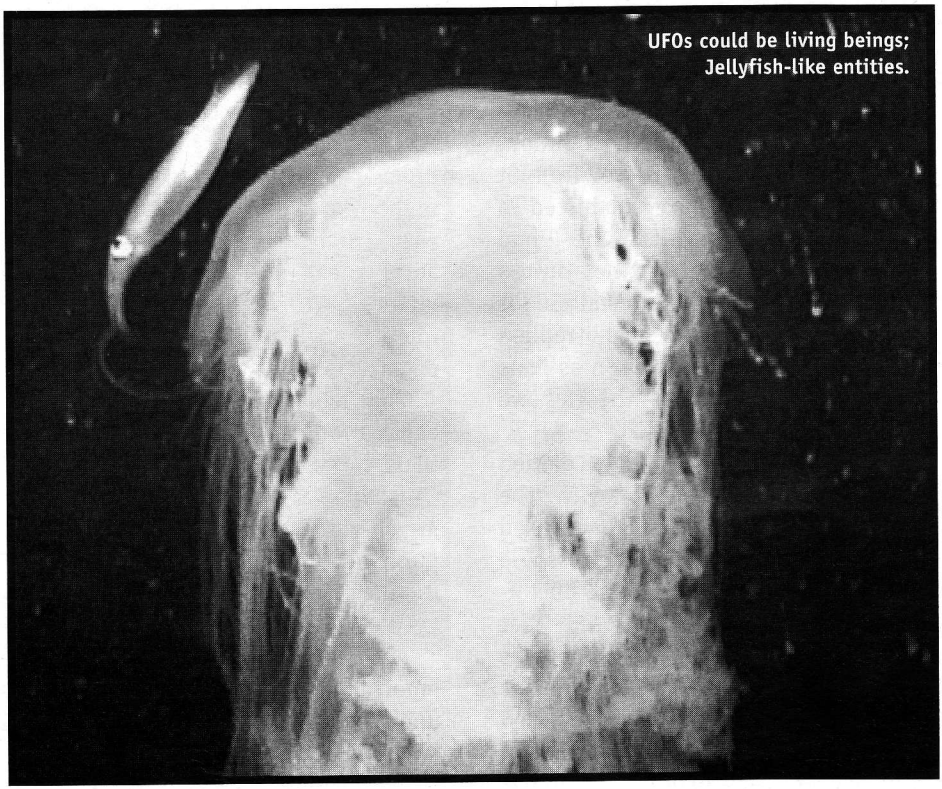
Nor was he alone in his opinion. A month later, John P. Bessor from St Thomas, Pennsylvania, submitted a similar theory, which he had developed in 1946, to the United States Air Force. Far from dismissing it as unrealistic, the officer who replied to Bessor described his notion as "one of the most intelligent theories we have received".

The sky-beast concept gained further impetus in 1955 with the publication in the USA of a detailed appraisal of this idea by Countess Zoe Wassilko-Serecki, a prominent liberal-minded thinker. She proposed that planet earth's upper atmosphere is populated by enormous bladder-like beasts with glowing bodies composed of energy enveloping a central core of solid matter. They exhibit the ability to change their shape at will, from a spherical configuration when stationary to a cigar-like form when moving, absorbing energy to fuel their non-corporeal beings. In the years following her statement, during which UFO sightings have become increasingly common, a notable number have indeed featured distinctly cigar-like shapes recalling the appearance of the sky-beasts predicted by the countess.

In addition, her ideas won praise from zoologist Ivan Sanderson, one of America's most celebrated investigators of mystery beasts. And in the early 1960s, scientist and hydrophone inventor John M. Cage from New Jersey drew comparisons between incidents involving dolphins following ships with sightings of UFOs trailing aeroplanes, postulating that these latter entities were in reality intelligent life-forms that fed upon negative electricity.

The most famous and extensive exploration of the sky-beast theory for UFOs, however, is that of Trevor James Constable, a radio officer in the US merchant marine. In 1978, he published his investigations and findings in a very absorbing book, entitled *Sky Creatures*.

According to Constable, some reported UFOs are indeed gigantic, undiscovered native life-forms highly modified for a wholly aerial existence within the earth's atmosphere. He named these exceedingly specialized organisms "critters" and described them as single-celled (like amoebae), but encased within a mica- or metal-like outer covering, and existing in a wide range of sizes – from as much as nearly a kilometre (half a mile) in length down to a few centimetres at most. The reason that these critters are seen only infrequently, explained Constable, is that they often reflect infra-red light (invisible to the human eye). Because they change colour, under certain conditions critters will



UFOs could be living beings; Jellyfish-like entities.

reflect visible light and it is then that they "become" UFOs. It seems that they can be photographed using infra-red cinefilm and an appropriate filter, and Constable's book includes many photos of alleged critters, obtained in the Mojave Desert in California.

In 1992, the concept of living UFOs, sometimes termed "bioforms", also received publicity outside the USA, through British author Andrew Collins's book, *The Circlemakers*. Collins reported how, while seeking an explanation for the formation of crop circles (see pp. 27–28), he uncovered the work of a hitherto-obscure scientist called Wilhelm Reich, who claimed to have discovered a mysterious type of energy termed orgone. Collins suggested that orgone may well hold the key to the crop circle mystery, claiming that all the phenomena documented in relation to modern-day crop circles have also been recorded in association with Constable's critters. In turn, if critters are composed of orgone, their occasional contact with the earth's surface could thus explain the circles' creation.

Critters, always assuming that they do exist, may not be the only form of atmospheric sky-beast native to our planet. During the Second World War, an early form of UFO was often encountered by fighter pilots, who reported seeing small balls of brilliant white or reddish light dancing around and pacing their aeroplanes in a manner that seemed uncannily intelligent, even playful – almost as if they were curious about the nature of the planes.

These balls of light became known as foo fighters, and were believed to be a secret weapon of the enemy, until it was discovered that American, British, German and Japanese pilots were all seeing them. Similar objects can sometimes be detected by radar too, whereupon they are referred to as gizmos or angels. Constable believes that foo fighters may be very primitive sky-beasts, less sentient than their giant-sized relatives.

There is no doubt that the concept of UFOs as living sky-beasts is exceedingly radical and would probably be dismissed out of hand by the more conservative members of the scientific community. Consequently, the last word should go to a leading biologist at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at Dayton, Ohio, which is the headquarters of the US Air Force's UFO investigations. In view of the controversial nature of this subject, he prefers to remain anonymous, but his opinions speak for themselves:

*When you toss a pebble into a pool, you see the water animals – the nymphs, crawfish, minnows, water insects – streaking away in fright. But almost before the ripples have died in the pool they are back, investigating curiously. Perhaps events on this earth – atomic explosions, rocket flights into the stratosphere and so on – have been like the pebble tossed into the pool. They have disturbed the stratosphere, perhaps have sent ripples into the fabric of space itself. And the space animals, in curiosity, are coming down to investigate.*

As a zoologist, I had always been perplexed by the absence of exclusively sky-dwelling life-forms on our planet, especially given the incredible ingenuity demonstrated by evolution in successfully populating everywhere else with living things. If Constable, Cage and other proponents of the sky-beast scenario are correct, however, perhaps I no longer need to be perplexed – merely frustrated that I have yet to glimpse any examples of evolution's best-kept but most amazing secret of all.

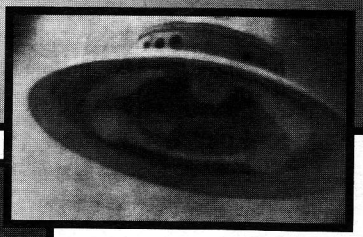
# Visitors from Venus – Extra-terrestrials or inter-dimensionals?

A surprising number of Americans have reputedly been visited by aliens *claiming* to be from other planets in our solar system, particularly Venus; but are these alleged extraterrestrials all that they seem to be, or is their true origin much closer to our own than we realize?

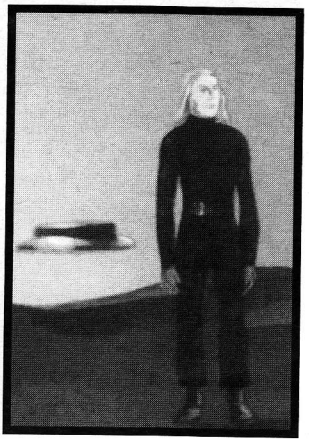
The most famous reported visitation from Venus took place during the early afternoon of 20 November 1952 in the Californian desert near Desert Center, when 61-year-old UFO enthusiast George Adamski supposedly encountered a sandy-haired humanoid Venusian. With slanting grey-green eyes, tanned hairless face, and wearing a shimmering one-piece garment, this distinctive figure communicated via sign-language and telepathy with Adamski for almost an hour, before making its departure aboard a scout ship hovering nearby. According to Adamski, he succeeded in taking photos of this ship, and some of his colleagues had been observing his contact with the Venusian through binoculars, at a distance of about 1.5 kilometres (1 mile).

In his books *Flying Saucers Have Landed* and *Inside the Space Ships*, Adamski alleged that he met the Venusian on several subsequent occasions and was taken on to its ship, travelling aboard it to the far side of the moon, where he spied cities, forests, mountains, lakes and a furry four-legged animal. In later years, he even claimed to have visited the ringed planet Saturn to attend an interplanetary conference!

Inevitably, Adamski's accounts drew short shrift from the scientific community and such scepticism has been adequately justified by astronomical research since his death in 1965. For example, America's manned lunar landings, beginning in 1969 with Apollo 11, revealed the moon to be a barren lifeless world, far removed from his descriptions of advanced lunar civilizations and



George Adamski claimed contact with Venusians.

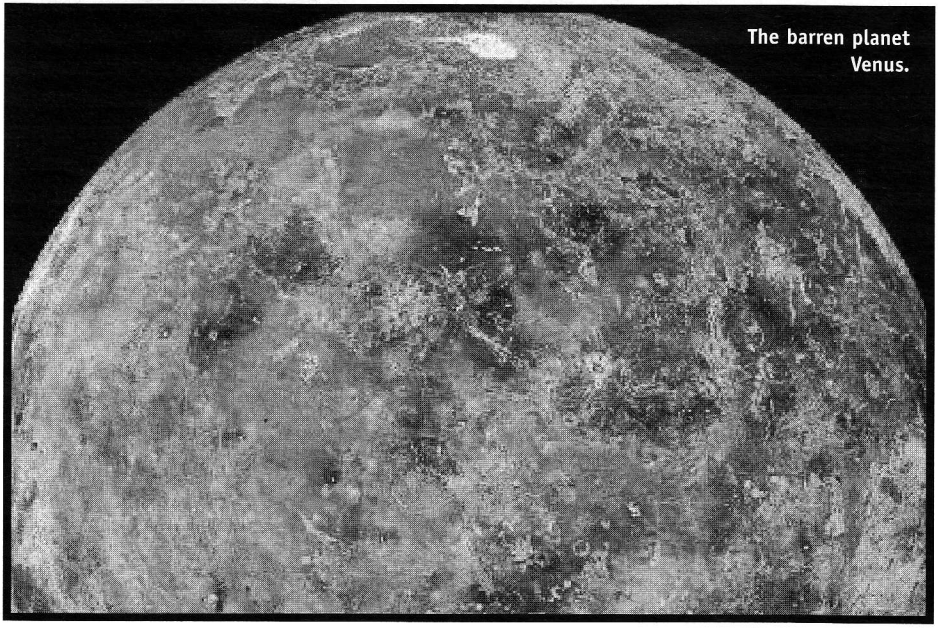


natural grandeur. Equally, as Saturn has been shown to be a gas planet composed principally of hydrogen, how it could function as a venue for a cosmic conference attended by Adamski, or any other humanoid form of life, is hard to imagine.

Even his famous photos of the Venusian scout-ship have failed to withstand the test of time. The common scientific consensus nowadays is that these were actually fakes, depicting models made from bottle coolers and chicken feeders.

As for Venus being the home planet of Adamski's olive-eyed, smooth-skinned visitor, it would be truly astounding if any humanoid civilization could exist on such a planet. Its fiery surface temperature of 480°C (896°F), baleful vista of volcanoes, omnipresent thunder and lightning storms, and sulphuric acid rainfall have inspired astronomers to liken this infernal world to a traditional image of hell!

In an attempt to circumvent this latter impasse, a number of researchers into the esoteric have suggested that Venusian humanoids may normally inhabit a dimension of higher "atomic vibration" than the physical three-dimensional level in which we live. For them this is a totally real and substantial dimension but one from which they must "step down" when wishing to manifest themselves to planet earth dwellers.



The barren planet Venus.

Yet even if all this is true, another issue equally difficult to resolve is the diversity of eyewitness descriptions concerning Venusians.

In 1950, Samuel Thompson saw a troop of nude diminutive Venusians with blond waist-length hair and dark skin, playing merrily in a glade near Markham, Washington, while their spaceship hovered close by. Although they were benevolent like other supposed Venusians, in Thompson's opinion they seemed extraordinarily childlike: indeed, his description is more reminiscent of elves or some other traditional race of Little People than of ETs.

Certainly they were in great contrast to the highly sophisticated, fully humanoid Venusians who regularly contacted Howard Menger throughout his life, following his initial meeting as a 10-year-old boy with a beautiful golden-eyed female Venusian near his New Jersey home in 1932. According to Menger, Venusian technology is 2500 years more advanced than our own, and the Venusians are vegetarians, whose specially processed foodstuffs possess a far greater nutritional content than their counterparts on planet earth.

The Aetherius Society is dedicated to storing up spiritual energy in mountain-contained "batteries" that can be discharged to trouble spots anywhere on planet earth for the easing of suffering. The society was founded in 1954 by George King, a former London taxi driver. King claims to be the earth's representative on a Saturn-based council called the Interplanetary Parliament, and also to be in communication with an unseen Cosmic Master called Aetherius, living on Venus. According to this society, Venusians are 2–2.75 metres (7–9 feet) tall, with long pale hair and cinnamon skin, eyes that lack pupils, and tiny feet. They no longer need to eat, their energy intake is accomplished merely by breathing; Aetherius, apparently, has not eaten for over 3000 years!

So who, if anyone, is correct out of the above selection of those claiming contact with Venusians? Is there any way of reconciling these and other conflicting testimonies? In their absorbing book *Life Beyond Planet Earth?*, Janet and Colin Bord offer some compelling speculations.

Many ufological sceptics believe that the variety of forms and life-styles of Venusians described by their earthly eyewitnesses indicates that these alien encounters were really hallucinations or visions induced by fear, stress, drugs or even dietary stimuli. However, as noted by the Bords, illusion may be as important as delusion. That is, some encounters with Venusians may be genuine, not imaginary, but the Venusians purposefully adopt whichever guise they consider to be the most influential for a given situation or eyewitness.

Perhaps the most thought-provoking aspect of the Venusian visitations, however, is that these beings might not even be from Venus at all. It is very interesting that most encounters with aliens claiming to have journeyed here from Venus – or from other planets within our solar system – occurred *before* space-probes had been sent out from the planet earth, exposing these worlds to be incapable of sustaining the existence of advanced forms of life. Since then, as the Bords have pointed out: "alien entities have continued to make contact with Earth people, but they have stopped claiming to come from our Solar System. As Mankind reaches out into the Universe, so the entities retreat – and change their tactics."

But why? Why do they apparently not wish us to learn their true origins? Perhaps, as the Bords suggest, their true home is far closer to us than we currently realize – a parallel planet earth sharing the same space as our own, yet existing in a separate dimension. Since its inhabitants can visit us on our planet (but not vice-versa), however, theirs must be much more advanced, socially and technologically. Even so, they may be afraid that their planet's existence would be threatened if ever a means of entering it were discovered by our more aggressive culture. And so, by spinning tales to us of populated extraterrestrial worlds, our visitors lure our minds away from the far likelier concept of interdimensional travel.

There is one other notable explanation that also eradicates an extraterrestrial origin for these supposed Venusians. Is it possible, as some UFO researchers have speculated, that they are actually from our own planet's future? Are these entities our own far-distant descendants, a highly evolved, advanced race of humans that may actually be visiting us to prevent us from embarking upon deleterious projects, or to study us as examples of their own less sophisticated, more barbaric past? Any consideration of time travel necessarily conjures up all manner of mind-bending paradoxes involving the future influencing the past, but there is little doubt that whatever they are, and wherever they have come from, our friendly neighbourhood Venusians are decidedly interested in our activities. It would be equally interesting, not to mention reassuring, to know the reason for their curiosity.

# The Goblins of Hopkinsville

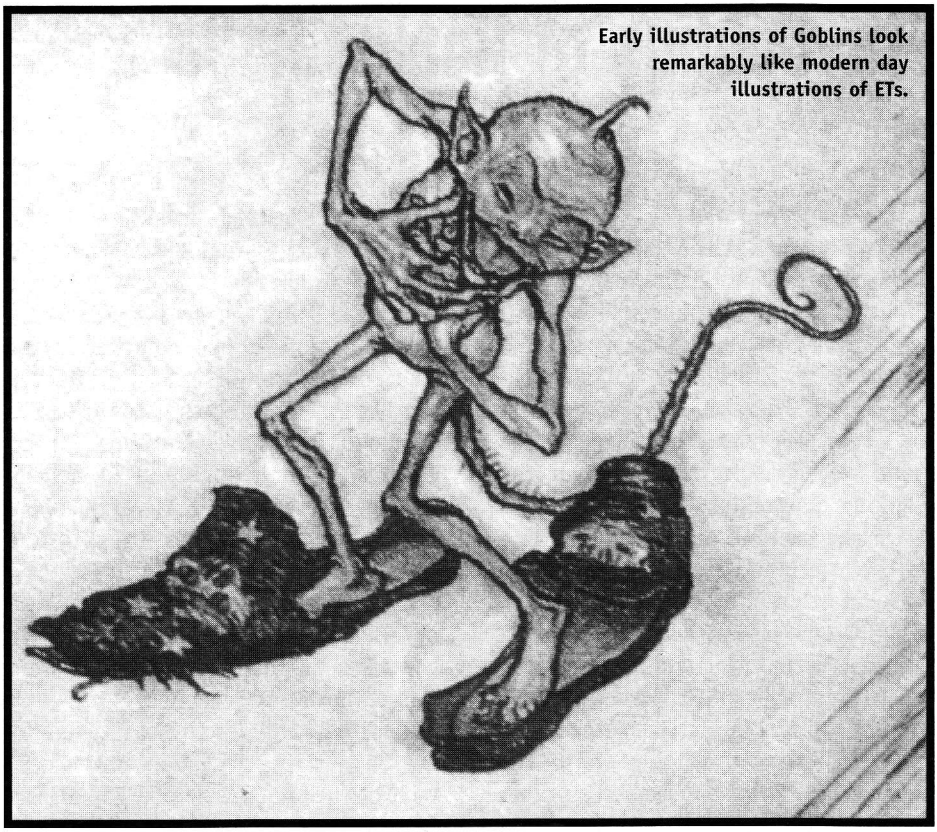
Many of the world's most celebrated cases of alleged encounters with extraterrestrials (ETs) have occurred in North America. Yet even these have attracted great scepticism from some investigators, so that their authenticity is still unresolved. There is, however, at least one very notable exception to this trend – the astonishing case of the Hopkinsville goblins.

On the evening of 21 August 1955, at their farmhouse in the hamlet of Kelly, close to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, the Suttons (seven adults and three children) were entertaining a visitor, a local friend called Billy Ray Taylor. At around 8 p.m., Taylor stepped outside to fetch some water from a well in the backyard, where he observed a silver object skim across the farmhouse and land about 100 metres (300 feet) further away in a gully hidden by trees. When he told the Suttons about this, they were amused but not convinced. Shortly afterwards, however, their dog, which was outside, began barking in such a frantic, hysterical manner that Taylor and one of the Suttons' sons, Elmer, went out to investigate. They were greatly shocked to see a glowing goblin-like creature floating towards them! They were carrying rifles, so both men shot the entity, but instead of falling to the ground it simply flipped backwards and scurried away.

It was soon back, however, and this time it was accompanied by at least one other of its kind. During the next 3–4 hours, the Suttons were besieged by these macabre "space goblins", which appeared in nearby trees, scrambled over their farmhouse and peered in at them through the windows. One of the creatures even leaned down from the porch roof, and with a taloned hand snatched at the hair of Taylor, who was standing underneath!

According to descriptions given by the Suttons in subsequent interviews, each of the "goblins" stood 75–105 cm ($2^1/_2$–$3^1/_2$ feet) tall, was principally bipedal and glowed silver. Its domed head was disproportionately large and bore two short antenna-like structures. It also had a pointed chin, a conical nose with a rounded knob at the tip and a pair of huge, pointed, elephantine ears. Its big, bulbous, laterally sited eyes glowed yellow, and its extremely wide mouth's upper lip was tucked beneath the lower lip. There was no neck.

The goblin's body had a powerful chest, but the rest of the torso was very



Early illustrations of Goblins look remarkably like modern day illustrations of ETs.

thin, and its arms and legs were positively spindly. The arms were extremely long too, so that its broad hands almost touched the floor even when the creature was standing upright. Each hand had four webbed, clawed fingers. Its legs were much shorter than its arms but were exceedingly thin and terminated in circular feet that resembled suction cups. There was no tail.

Merely to be confronted by such entities would be alarming enough, but the most unnerving aspect of the Suttons' prolonged encounter with the goblins was that these extraordinary beings appeared to be totally immune to bullets. The Suttons scored several successful hits, but on each occasion the goblin simply back-flipped like a circus acrobat and scuttled away on all fours, or, if hit while in a tree, merely floated slowly down to the ground. Eventually, the Suttons and Taylor

became so frightened that they ran out of the house, jumped into two cars and fled at top speed to the police station at Hopkinsville, where they spoke at great length to the local Chief of Police Russell Greenwell, his deputy George Batts and some other officers at the station.

Not surprisingly, the police were thoroughly nonplussed by the Suttons' incredible story, but they were also struck by their genuine terror. Something had clearly frightened these hardy, no-nonsense country people very severely. And so, after persuading the Suttons to return home, Greenwell and the other officers went back with them, but nothing could be found. Yet as soon as the police left the farmhouse and drove back to Hopkinsville, the goblins returned, inspecting the farmhouse and its human contents as before. By sunrise, however, they had gone – and this time they did not come back.

Something that may be an interesting sequel to the Suttons' experience occurred near Gastagh in Vicenza, Italy, on 24 November 1978. Angelo D'Ambros was gathering firewood in the woods when he encountered two small entities that greatly resembled the Hopkinsville goblins and which, like them, floated through the air rather than walking. After he threatened them with a piece of wood, they fled away, but when he chased after them he saw them enter a 2-metre- (6-foot) high domed craft, standing on legs, which promptly flew off into the sky at great speed.

The case of the Hopkinsville goblins has been exhaustively investigated by many different UFO researchers, but no one has currently revealed any evidence, or reason, to suggest that this was a hoax, or even an instance of mass hallucination or misidentification of known animals. Also worth noting is that despite being subjected to extensive public ridicule over the years, not one of the eleven eyewitnesses has ever retracted their story or any portion of it. So if the case *is* genuine, where did the Suttons' amazing visitors come from?

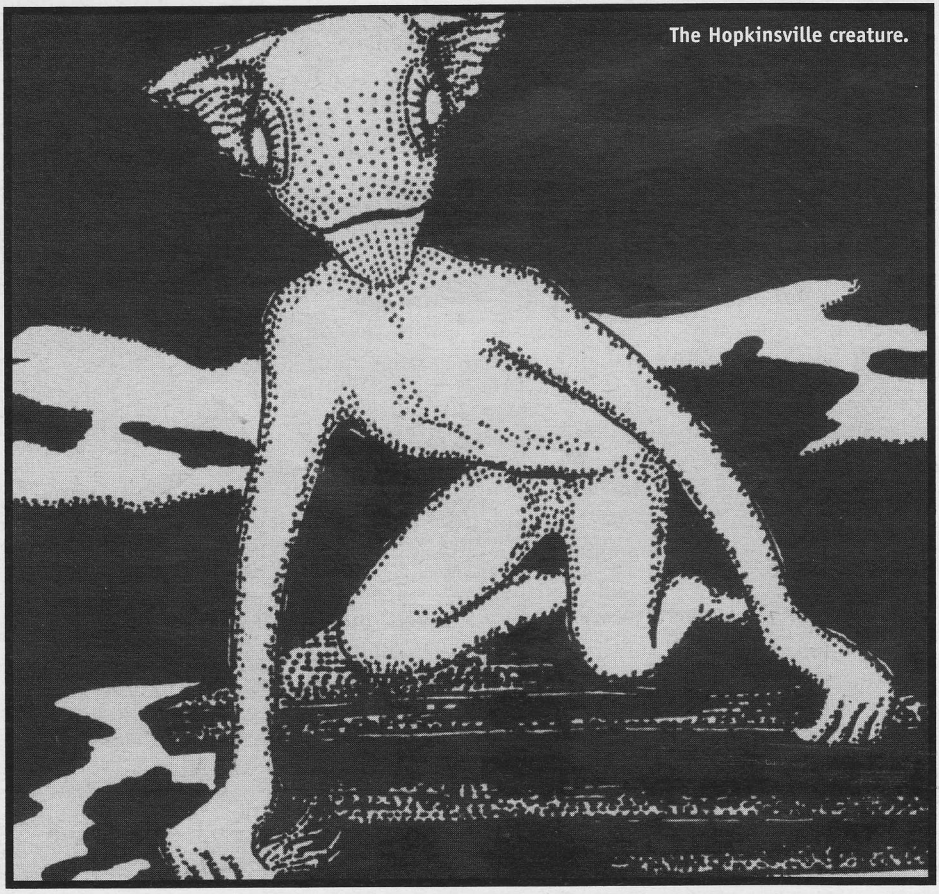
If they are truly extraterrestrial, they are beyond the limits of our world – and the subject of this book. However, as with the visiting Venusians documented earlier (pp.137–139), it is possible that the Hopkinsville entities' undisclosed origin owes more to inner space than to outer space. These large-headed, big-eared, thin-limbed, bug-eyed, diminutive beings bear a very striking resemblance to certain forms of Little People, notably the goblins – hence their ufological nickname. Reading through the UFO literature, moreover, it becomes increasingly apparent that many human encounters with supposed ETs and with Little People share a surprising number of similarities.

Just like fairies, elves and other Little People, a lot of reported ETs are

small in size, emit a glowing light or appear within a ball of light, seem to be invulnerable to bullets or suchlike, and can float above the ground. The ability to vanish without trace and to hypnotize (enchant?) their human contacts are further characteristics shared by ETs and Little People.

In many documented cases of humans allegedly abducted by ETs, the person believes that he has been abducted for only a short time, when in reality a considerably longer period has passed by. Once again, this time-lapse scenario is mirrored in traditional folktales, featuring fairy-abducted humans who believe that their visit to Faerie has spanned only a few hours, but ultimately discover that years, even centuries, have flitted by.

The comparison can be taken even further: just as some reports of alien



The Hopkinsville creature.

abductions feature bizarre-sounding claims that the ETs have forced their human abductees to mate with them (ostensibly to improve their alien lineage), so too in fairy tales are there many accounts of fairies kidnapping human babies to rear as their own, replacing them with changelings.

Yet where do shared similarities end and shared identities begin? As we saw earlier (p.24), whereas modern-day sightings of traditional Little People are far fewer than in previous centuries, reports of UFOs and ETs are ever-increasing in number. In just over a century, humankind's technological knowledge and capabilities have advanced immeasurably. If Little People are real entities, why should we assume that their capabilities have not advanced too? And bearing in mind that their skills have always far exceeded our own, should we really be too surprised if, while we have progressed only as far as the aeroplane and the manned moon rocket, the Little People of the late twentieth century have developed much more sophisticated flying machines, sleek aerial skycraft that we refer to as UFOs?

These notions may well seem more akin to science-fantasy than factual science, but UFO researchers recognize that the parallels between human encounters with Little People and with supposed ETs are too extensive to be dismissed entirely as coincidence. Consequently, if, as popularly believed by investigators of the Little People, this enigmatic race derives from a parallel equivalent of our own planet earth, but can travel freely between the two, this could explain visitations by various of today's reputed ETs, such as the Hopkinsville goblins, and perhaps even the notably elfin "Venusians" seen by Samuel Thompson (p.138), dancing just like latter-day Little People near their hovering spaceship.

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